

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SIG-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-20 IO-14 ARA-14 ACDA-12 /130 R

DRAFTED BY AF/P:BARUSSELL:BAR
APPROVED BY AF/P:RWHOLLIDAY
-----108481 042043Z /64

R 041932Z APR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY BONN
XMT AMEMBASSY FREETOWN
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY BANGUI
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY KIGALI
AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: FOLLOWING IS AN UNOFFICIAL, UNCORRECTED EXCERPT
FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING, APRIL 3, 1978.
IF NECESSARY OFFICIAL VERSION WILL FOLLOW.

Q. THE SECRETARY OF STATE IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT HE IS
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NOW PLANNING TO MEET WITH THE VARIOUS PARTIES ON THE
RHODESIAN MATTER ON APRIL 15TH IN DAR ES SALAAM AND THEN
THERE WILL BE ANOTHER LATER MEETING ALSO IN APRIL IN
ANOTHER PART OF AFRICA TO WHICH SMITH AND OTHER INTERN-
AL PARTIES WOULD BE INVITED. CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT ANY
SPECIFIC PLANS THAT ARE NOW MADE?

A. I AM SORRY. I CAN'T. I HAVEN'T EVEN SEEN THAT REPORT, JIM. I WILL BE GLAD TO TAKE THE QUESTION.

Q. WELL, CAN YOU TELL US ANYTHING ABOUT THE SECRETARY'S TRAVEL PLANS? IS HE, IN FACT, PLANNING TO GO BACK TO AFRICA?

A. I AM NOT AWARE OF ANY PLANS, BUT I WILL CHECK THEM FOR YOU, JIM.

Q. SENATOR CASE RECENTLY WROTE AMBASSADOR YOUNG "I AM PLEASED THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT IS BEGINNING TO SEE THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT AS A SIGNIFICANT STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION." I THINK YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH THAT LETTER. BUT ON MARCH 27TH JOHN TRATTNER SAID THAT THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT IS "ILLEGAL." THEN YESTERDAY AMBASSADOR YOUNG TOLD NBC "OUR GOVERNMENT DOESN'T OPPOSE THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT."

MY QUESTION IS: ON WHAT DATE AND DUE TO WHAT CAUSE DID THE STATE DEPARTMENT DECIDE TO CHANGE ITS MIND AND RULE THAT THE SETTLEMENT IS ILLEGAL?

A. I HAVE SOMETHING ON THAT HERE. WAIT A MINUTE. WE SHOULD NOT CONFUSE DISTINCT ELEMENTS HERE. IN RELATION TO UNCLASSIFIED

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THE SALISBURY AGREEMENT, WE HAVE SAID THAT TO THE DEGREE THAT ITS COMPONENT PARTS ACCORD WITH THE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES EMBODIED IN THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS IT IS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. HOWEVER, WE HAVE ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE AGREEMENT AS A WHOLE IS INADEQUATE TO THE DIFFICULT TASK OF BRINGING ABOUT A PEACEFUL AND ENDURING SETTLEMENT.

THE QUESTION OF ILLEGALITY REFERS STRICTLY TO THE GOVERNING STRUCTURE OF RHODESIA.

I THINK WE MADE THE POINT LAST WEEK THAT AS THE SMITH REGIME IS CONSIDERED TO BE AN ILLEGAL ONE, ANY GOVERNING MECHANISM WHICH IT ESTABLISHES MUST BY DEFINITION ALSO BE CONSIDERED ILLEGAL AS LONG AS IT IS NOT RECOGNIZED AS A LEGITIMATE GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY BY GREAT BRITAIN, WHICH IS THE LEGAL SOVEREIGN OF RHODESIA.

Q. DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT SHARE SENATOR CASE'S CONCERN FOR WHITE MINORITY RIGHTS IN ZIMBABWE AND IF SO, HOW ARE YOU SHOWING THIS CONCERN?

A. OF COURSE WE SHARE THE CONCERNS THAT NO PARTICULAR CLASS OF PEOPLE IS DESTROYED. WE ARE AFTER A JUST AND A LASTING PEACE IN RHODESIA WHICH WILL PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF ALL PEOPLE WHO LIVE THERE.

Q. STRIPPED OF SOME LEGALISTIC LANGUAGE, ARE YOU SAYING ANY ARRANGEMENT MADE BY SMITH IS ILLEGAL IF IT DOESN'T HAVE LONDON'S APPROVAL?

A. WE ARE SAYING THAT ANY GOVERNING MECHANISM WHICH THE PRESENTLY ILLEGAL GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHES WILL STILL BE ILLEGAL AS LONG AS GREAT BRITAIN WHICH IS THE SOVEREIGN AUTHORITY DOES NOT RECOGNIZE IT.

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Q. BUT YOU ARE SUGGESTING NOW STRONGER THAN YOU HAVE BEFORE THAT THIS INTERNAL ARRANGEMENT IS NOT ONLY A FIRST STEP BUT IS ILLEGAL BECAUSE BRITAIN DOESN'T SAY IT IS OKAY WITH THEM. THAT I THOUGHT TOOK IT A STEP FURTHER.

A. WELL, YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE TO DRAW YOUR OWN JUDGMENTS ABOUT THAT.

Q. EVANS AND NOVAK REPORTED THIS MORNING THAT THE U.S. INTELLIGENCE BELIEVES THAT THERE IS LITTLE CHANCE THAT THE CUBANS WILL INTERVENE IN RHODESIA BECAUSE IN THAT EVENT, SAY EVANS AND NOVAK, SOUTH AFRICANS WHO "HANDLED THE CUBANS IN ANGOLA" WOULD ATTACK.

I AM WONDERING DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT BELIEVE THAT THIS IS TRUE OR FALSE?

A. I DON'T THINK I WANT TO SPEAK SPECIFICALLY TO THE QUESTION OR TO THE POINT OF VIEW RAISED IN THAT COLUMN, BUT IT IS TRUE THAT AS LONG AS THE TENSION CONTINUES IN RHODESIA THERE IS ALWAYS THE DANGER THAT OUTSIDE FORCES WILL ENTER AND INCREASE THE TENSION AND THE VIOLENCE, WHICH THE WHOLE POINT OF OUR POLICY IS TO AVOID THAT.

Q. DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT WANT TO UNTANGLE THE RECORD HERE ON WHERE IT STOOD AS OF FRIDAY, WHICH WAS THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT WAS SAYING THAT IT HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF ANY CUBAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN ERITREA WHILE THE WHITE HOUSE WAS SAYING AT THE PRESIDENT'S PARTY THAT CUBAN FORCES WERE BEING DEPLOYED TO ERITREA.

CAN YOU NOW CLARIFY THAT POSITION?

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A. WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY NOTED THE PRESENCE OF CUBAN FORCES IN ERITREA, BUT I HAVE NO COMMENT TO OFFER ON THE EXTENT OR DETAILS OF A COMBAT ROLE FOR CUBANS THERE.

Q. ARE THEY IN A COMBAT ROLE AT ALL?

A. I WILL TAKE THAT QUESTION AND SEE WHETHER WE CAN GET YOU A MORE PRECISE ANSWER TO IT.

Q. DOES OUR ATTEMPT TO WORK OUT AN UNDERSTANDING WITH THE SOVIET UNION TO REDUCE CUBAN STRENGTH INVOLVE ERITREA TOO?

A. I THINK WE HAVE SAID THAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE NUMBER OF CUBANS IN ETHIOPIA REDUCED AND I THINK THAT REMAINS OUR POSITION.

Q. YOU SPEAK ABOUT REDUCTION OF THE NUMBER OF CUBANS. WASN'T IT THE POLICY HERE OR AT LEAST AS SET BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY THAT THEY SHOULD GET OUT OF THERE ALL TOGETHER?

A. I CAN'T CALL BACK THE EXACT WORDS. I AM SORRY. BUT I KNOW THAT WE HAVE BEEN SAYING THAT WE WANT TO SEE THEM REDUCED. WE DO NOT THINK THAT THEIR PRESENCE THERE IS HELPFUL.

Q. IS THE STATE DEPARTMENT NOW SAYING THAT IT DOES NOT FIND VALID THE INFORMATION THAT THE WHITE HOUSE CLAIMED WAS CORRECT ABOUT CUBAN FORCES BEING DEPLOYED IN ERITREA?

A. LET ME TAKE THAT QUESTION, TOO.

Q. MY UNDERSTANDING IS THAT THE DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY HAD ACKNOWLEDGED THE PRESENCE OF CUBAN MILITARY ADVISERS IN ERITREA, NOT CUBAN FORCES IN ERITREA.

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A. LET ME SEE WHETHER I CAN'T CLEAR UP THE USE OF THAT WORD "FORCES" AND WHAT OUR INFORMATION TELLS US ABOUT THAT.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION THERE AT ALL ABOUT ADDITIONAL CUBANS ENTERING OR LEAVING ETHIOPIA?

A. YES. WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT WITH THE SOMALI FORCES

OUT OF ETHIOPIAN TERRITORY, THE NUMBER OF SOVIET AND CUBAN MILITARY PERSONNEL IN ETHIOPIA, WHICH IS ALREADY EXCESSIVE, IN OUR VIEW, CONTINUES TO GROW RATHER THAN DIMINISH.

Q. IS IT YOUR INFORMATION THAT BOTH RUSSIANS AND CUBANS ARE INCREASING THEIR NUMBERS THERE?

A. WELL, IT SAYS HERE THAT THE NUMBER OF SOVIET AND CUBAN MILITARY PERSONNEL CONTINUES TO GROW RATHER THAN DIMINISH.

NOW ONE COULD READ THAT EITHER WAY. BUT PRETTY MUCH ALL ALONG, I THINK WE HAVE BEEN GIVING YOU A FIGURE OF A THOUSAND SOVIETS THERE, AND I HAVE NOT BEEN TOLD THAT THAT HAS CHANGED.

Q. WHY DID THIS GOVERNMENT THINK, AS IT APPARENTLY DID, THAT THE NUMBER WOULD DIMINISH RATHER THAN GROW?

A. I AM NOT PREPARED TO GO INTO THAT.

Q. I THINK THE DEPARTMENT CONCEDED THAT IT WAS ETHIOPIA'S SOVEREIGN RIGHT TO INVITE FOREIGN TROOPS IN TO HELP IT REPEL AGGRESSION. DOES IT ALSO CONCEDE THAT IT IS ETHIOPIA'S SOVEREIGN RIGHT TO CALL IN FOREIGN TROOPS TO PREVENT A SECESSION?
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A. I WILL HAVE TO TAKE THAT QUESTION.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING NEW ON THE CASE OF MR. LEFEVRE? IS HE STILL IN JAIL? HAS HE BEEN SEEN BY AN AMERICAN?

A. YES. THIS IS REGARDING THE DETENTION OF AN AMERICAN NATIONAL WHOSE NAME IS LOUIS LEFEVRE. TWO CONSULAR OFFICERS FROM THE EMBASSY IN LAGOS VISITED MR. LEFEVRE IN PRISON ON SATURDAY. AT THAT TIME, HE WAS WELL AND IN GOOD SPIRITS. UNFORTUNATELY WE STILL DON'T KNOW--OR I DON'T HAVE--ANY INFORMATION TO INDICATE WHAT THE CHARGES AGAINST HIM ARE. VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NEWS MEDIA COMMENTS, DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE086308
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: BARUSSELL:BAR
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780145-0932
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780493/aaaadbot.tel
Line Count: 269
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e1167db6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3077996
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FOLLOWING IS AN UNOFFICIAL, UNCORRECTED EXCERPT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING, APRIL 3, 1978.
IF NECESSARY OFFICIAL VERSION WILL FOLLO W.
TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, AMGT
To: AF POSTS LONDON MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e1167db6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014